

# Department of Social Services

## Constituent Liaison

### Annual Report

2007

Prepared and submitted by  
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## **Introduction**

The Constituent Liaison position began on January 1, 2006. This report covers the activities of the Constituent Liaison from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

### **Key Responsibilities of the Constituent Liaison:**

- The Constituent Liaison serves as an independent source of information and explanation for the public about services provided by the Department of Social Services.
- The Constituent Liaison receives complaints from the public about services provided by the Department, and refers the complaints to relevant management for response.
- The Constituent Liaison monitors response to any complaints to ensure responses are comprehensive and timely.

### **Confidentiality**

- The Constituent Liaison keeps personal information confidential. However, it may be necessary for individuals to sign a release of information to provide assistance in particular situations. Refusal to sign a release of information may limit the assistance that can be provided.

### **Reporting by the Constituent Liaison**

- The Constituent Liaison is located in the Department of Social Services, Office of the Secretary and is independent of individual divisions within the Department.
- The Constituent Liaison reports results of key responsibilities to the Secretary of the Department.

## Scope of the Constituent Liaison

- The Constituent Liaison can:
  - Answer questions about services provided by the Department of Social Services.
  - Receive complaints about services provided by the Department and ensure complainants receive a timely and comprehensive response.
- The Constituent Liaison cannot:
  - Provide information about other state agencies, although a referral will be made to the relevant state agency if possible.
  - Receive complaints about other state agencies, federal agencies, the judicial system, or private actions that do not involve the Department of Social Services.
  - Review issues that are already in the appeals process.
  - Provide legal advice.

## **Summary of Complaints and Inquiries**

The Constituent Liaison provides a unique service for the Department of Social Services. Those who consult with the office know that they will receive respectful treatment, honest and objective information or recommendations, and that no negative consequences will result from their contact with the office. We want the public to feel the Constituent Liaison can be approached with any type DSS inquiry or concern.

Constituents can learn about the availability of the Constituent Liaison's services via brochures and posters placed in all DSS field offices, the DSS website homepage and directly from DSS staff.

The public can contact the Constituent Liaison in a variety of ways:

- In writing to Constituent Liaison, Department of Social Services, 700 Governor's Drive, Pierre, SD 57501; or
- By calling (605)773-3165 or 1-800-597-1603; or

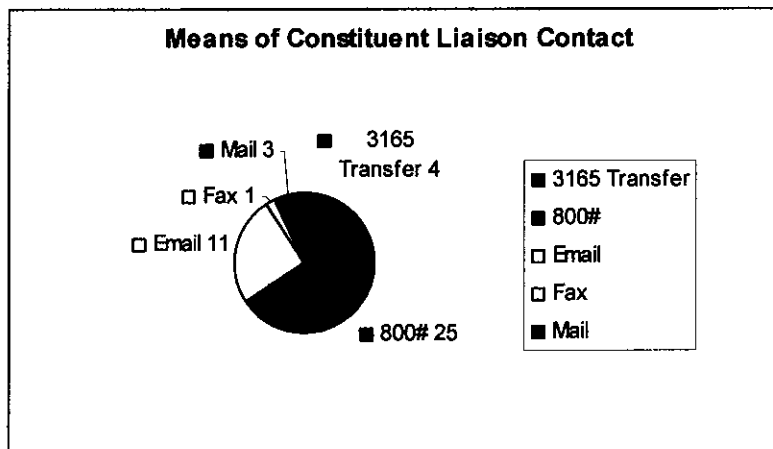
- Via e-mail at DSSConstituentLiaison@state.sd.us.
- Fax (605-773-4855)
- Transfer from another office

If contacting the Constituent Liaison by mail or e-mail, a confirmation receipt is sent so the individual knows their contact was received.

#### Means of Contact Breakdown:

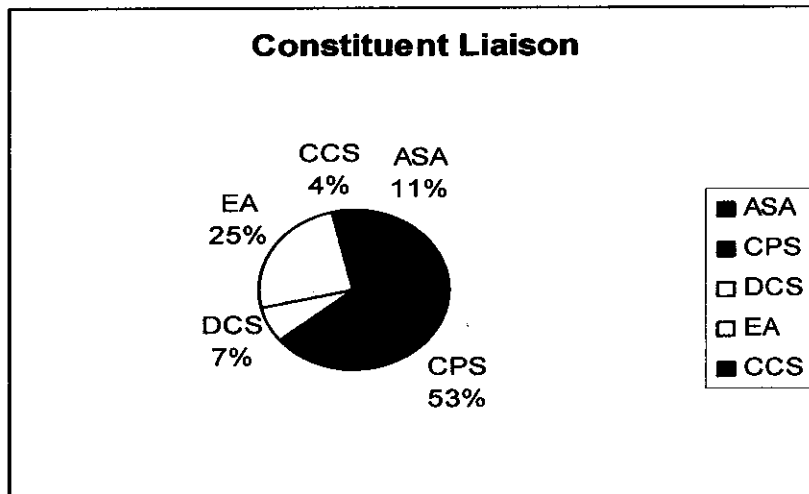
1. 1-800#:	25
2. Emails:	11
3. Transfer from DSS Main line:	4
4. Fax:	1
5. Mail:	3

Total: 44



Complaints by Division (includes duplicated contacts):

1. Child Protection Services (CPS)	15
2. Economic Assistance (EA)	7
3. Adult Services and Aging (ASA)	3
4. Division of Child Support (DCS)	2
5. Child Care Services (CCS)	1
Total:	28



The complaints by Division graph show duplicated complaints. Of the total number of complaints for CPS, 5 of the contacts were from the same individual. All contacts with the constituent were logged and processed by the Constituent Liaison.

Breakdown of Complaints/Concerns and Inquiries/Questions

There were a total of 29 complaints/concerns (duplicated) and 15 inquiries/questions.

## Examples of the types of inquires/questions received:

- ◆ Calling for DSS program information:
  - Child Support
  - Adult Services
  - Economic Assistance
  - Child Protection
  
- ◆ Calling with general questions:
  - Individual requesting information on social worker education requirements
  - How do I change child support jurisdiction to another state?
  - Would like information on how to become a child custody evaluator.

## Complaints by Subject Matter (unduplicated)

### Breakdown by subject matter:

1. Staff	9
2. Rules and regulations	4
3. Problem with service delivery	5
4. Concerns about family member	5
5. Other	1
Total:	24

## Complaint Resolutions

The Constituent Liaison handles complaints in a variety of ways depending upon the complexity or the severity of the situation. Constituents appreciate the fact they are being heard and whenever possible the situation is resolved. Sometimes due to federal eligibility requirements and/or confidentiality requirements, the Department is unable to provide the desired outcome. For the most part constituents seem satisfied to have an unbiased individual who will listen to their situation and handle their complaint in a professional manner.

The following is a list of means by which complaints are handled:

- Referred to Supervisor or Regional Manager for resolution
- Review of constituent case file and follow up
- Conference call with constituent, DSS staff and Constituent Liaison
- Involvement of program administrator to resolve staff training issues
- Full investigation including face to face interviews

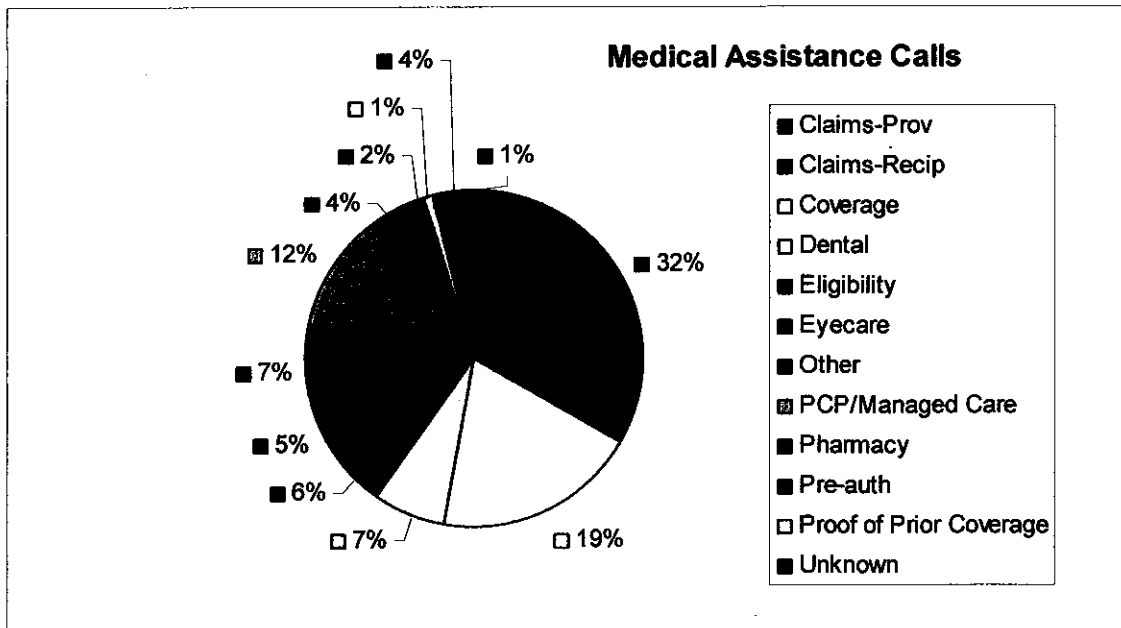
### **Other Activities of the Constituent Liaison**

In April of 2007, the Constituent Liaison began assisting people through the Medical Service Customer Service toll free line. The majority of questions received through the Customer Service line are about medical services or coverage, unpaid medical assistance bills, and selecting or changing primary care providers. The total number of calls logged from April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 was 2,857. Awareness of this assistance for people on Medicaid continues to grow. Due to the increased awareness, much of the Constituent Liaison's time is dedicated to assisting recipients with their inquiries and concerns regarding Medicaid.

### **Breakdown of calls received:**

1. Claims-provider	27
2. Claims-recipient	927
3. Coverage	557
4. Dental	194
5. Eligibility	168
6. Eye care	138
7. GFL Reimbursement	40
(Gas, Food, Lodging)	
8. Recovery & Fraud	40
9. Other	211
(See below)	
10. PCP/Managed Care	331
(Primary Care Provider)	
11. Pharmacy	123

12. Pre-Authorization	49
13. Proof of prior coverage	22
14. Unknown	110
(See below)	
Total:	2,857



### Category Explanation

- ◆ Other:
  - How do I become a SD Medicaid provider?
  - I lost my Medicaid card
  - What is the phone number for the Social Security Administration office?
- ◆ Unknown:
  - Calls received with very little detail only name and phone number. The calls are then returned, but either do not have an answering machine or they do not return call.

The Constituent Liaison completed the annual 2007 DSS Customer Satisfaction Survey. The 2007 DSS Customer Satisfaction Survey results indicate the Department continues to improve customer service, which is one of the key goals of the Strategic Plan.



The Constituent Liaison serves as the facilitator for the Adult Placement Committee. The committee began meeting September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The purpose of the committee is to help place adults with TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), youth transitioning from CPS to adult services, and adults with other mental health issues requiring special services. The overall goal of the committee is to help with placement issues much like the state placement committee does for children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Porter-Hanson  
Constituent Liaison